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The Consequences of Conflicts on Development in Africa

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Abstract:

The most challenging issue that is confronting African development is that of growing conflicts in the continent. It is widely recognized that no nation can make meaningful progress in terms of development in an era of multiple conflicts ravaging its people. Thus, the reasons for conflicts in Africa could be grouped under the followings namely: social, political and economic factors among others. The study is a theoretical analysis of the concept and context of consequences of conflicts on development in Africa. The study will adopt secondary sources of data collection for the whole understanding of the main subject. The literature will gather from the studies of scholars in the area of conflicts as a root cause of underdevelopment in Africa. The paper will argue that for Africa to achieve its full potentials of development there is the need to urgently avoid any forms of conflicts in its entirety. The paper will also provide a synopsis of recommendations on how best to cope or reduce conflicts in Africa in order to fast track social, political and economic development on the continent.

Keywords: Conflict, challenges, development, underdevelopment

1. Introduction

In a conflict free society development strives quickly and easily. African continent has had series of conflicts ranging from intra and inter. All of which various steps and strategies were applied to resolve them. Some of the conflicts were resolved there and then but later resurfaced. However, African continent is made up of several countries with different ethnic, religious and cultural beliefs. African history has shown that the continent has gone through series of conflicts and these conflicts translated to negative developmental stride. Most of these conflicts were more of civil wars and border conflicts. The conflicts that resulted into civil wars in African continent include: Liberia (1980- 2003) in which about 250,000 people were killed, Somalia (1988-1991) which also claimed 350,000 to 1,000,000 lives and at the same time created a dysfunctional government, Nigeria (1967 - 1970), Sudan (1990 - 1995), Chad (1965 - 1985), Rwanda (1991 - 2001), Burundi (1991 - 2001) and Sierra-Leone (1991 - 2001). All the countries that experienced wars over time did not only suffers from unrest but also nope the progress of development of those nations (Shedrack, 2016).

Border conflict was another major challenge among African countries that retarded the attainment of development. Nigeria - Cameroun conflict on Bakassi peninsular since 1970's, Morocco - Algeria on the issue of Atlas Mountains in October, 1963, Libya - Chad conflict in 1980 - 1982, Somalia - Kenya war of 1963 - 1967 over the loss of parts of Somalia to Kenya, Ethiopia - Eritrea conflict 1962 - 1979, Uganda - Tanzania conflict of 1978 - 1979 and Ethiopia - Somalia crises of 1964 - 1978 on the issue of Uganda desert region. Just of recent in Congo about thirty (30) people were killed as a result of ethnic violence (Channel Television, 2018).

Considering the retrospective history of the African continent's conflicts, it shows that persistent conflicts in the continent are one of the distinct features of Africa. Alabi (2006) noted that the history of Africa is replete with conflicts. This is not to say that Africa is the only continent in which conflicts occur, in Latin America, countries like Peru, Guatemala, Mexico and Columbia suffered various degrees of conflicts. Asia equally experienced conflicts in Iraq, Cambodia and Burma. Europe had few countries that had conflicts namely; Northern Ireland, Bosnia, Serbia and Turkey. It is online that conflict has cut across the entire continent of the world that is why that most scholars have offered to observe as it stampedes development.

2. Theoretical Framework

To understand the context of consequences of conflicts on development in Africa, it is of paramount importance to understand one of the theories of conflicts.

The theory that this study will adopt is Frustration- Aggression theory which was propounded by John Dollard and his research associates first developed in 1939 and was further modernized by Leonard Berkowitz and Aubrey Yates in 1962, which seems to be the most currently used from violent behaviour emanating as a result of a failure to meet people's needs. Theorists who rely on this explanation used the psychological theories of motivation and behaviour, as well as frustration and Aggression (Shedrack, 2016). The scholars of this theory tried to explain the difference between what people want and deserve to what they actually get- the "want-get-ratio" and difference between "expected need satisfaction" and actual need satisfaction (Faleti, 2016).

This theory expatiates that where the expected need did not meet achievement, the possibility is for the people or individual concerned to confront people seems to be frustrating their desires to be achieved. This is the central focus of argument that Ted Robert Gurr's relative deprivation thesis addressed in saying that "the greater the discrepancy, however, marginal between what is sought and what seem attainable, the greater will be the chance that anger and violence will result (Faleti, 2016).

The issue in Frustration- Aggression theory is that aggression is not been carried as a natural phenomenon but that it is as a result of frustration as biological theorists assume and in a way in which people are denied of their rightful desires either directly or indirectly the consequences of been disappointed may result to anger and it may be violence that will be focused on those who are directly responsible for lack of attainment of those desires.

In a situation where feelings of frustration assume a wider dimension among the people and people concerned are getting less than they deserve, the political leaders at that point in time try to find out what individual or the people are looking for, a round table discussions can be explored. Some often have the belief that going into negotiation is a sign of weakness on the part of the leaders. The theory also explained that it is a fact that political leader or community leader that shows concern to their people is enough to inform people that the leaders are doing well.

For proper understanding of the theory, crises of the Niger Delta area of Nigeria where frustration leads to aggression, they claimed to have gone into a peaceful negotiation with Federal government on the oil exploration and subsequent sharing formula, youths decided to take law into their hands leading to vandalization of pipe lines and kidnapping of oil workers. Another classical case of regional, religious and ethnic conflict is that of Sudan that led to the independence of Southern Sudan.

3. Conflict

Conflict is a word that is linked up with negative perception that often creates destabilization in the entire human existence. Many scholars have tried to posit meaning of conflict in different ways because it lacks universal acceptable definition. However, whatever meaning is provided must have an element of hostility among the various scholars. According to Holsti (1983) who posits that conflict is a particular relationship between state or rival factions within a state which implies subjective hostilities or tension manifested by subjective economic or military hostilities. Coser (1998) viewed conflict as a struggle over values and claims to scarce status, power and resources in which the aim of conflicting parties is to injure or eliminate their rivals.

4. Development

Development has no universal acceptable definition. This is because the word development is a relative term. What someone or nation may think as a development might not necessarily mean to someone or nation. However, development is a process of dynamism in relation to a shift from old to new. Many scholars have tried to provide various definitions of the word development. Todaro (1994) viewed development as a multi-dimensional process involving the re-organization and re-orientation of the entire economic and social system. This involves in addition to improvement of income and output, radical changes in institutional, social and administrative structures as well as in popular attitudes, customs and beliefs. The above definition explained that development has to do with physical process and a state of mind. Seers (1968) perceived development from different ways. However, he sees development as the questions to ask about a country's development such as: What has been happening to poverty? What has been happening to unemployment? What has been happening to inequality? If all three of these have declined from high levels, then beyond doubt this has been a period of development for the country concerned. If one or two of these central problems have been growing worse, especially if all three have, it would be strange to call the result development, even if per capita income doubled. Rodney (2009) in his own part attributed development to be a many-sided process. At the level of the individual it implies increase skills and capacity, greater freedom, creativity, self-discipline, responsibility and material wellbeing. The definition has gone beyond economic development or improvement.

From the above submissions, the scholar's definitions centred on all aspects of human beings ranging from social, political and economic prosperity because all the ideologies focused on human improvement standard.

Studies have shown that since civil wars in 1960s the major risk factors are poverty, low economic growth and high dependence on natural resources. Development in African continent is stampeded with persistence poverty and subsequently the cause of insecurity as a result of lack of decent livelihood and human survival. Poverty has led to different kinds of conflicts. Food which is the main factor of human survival for good health and productive life are always disrupted with the presence of insecurity. Conflicts in Africa have resulted to massive displacement of people in the continent and the core cause

of migrants into neighbouring countries. As a result of these movement resulting from conflicts disease like HIV/AIDS are on the increased according to UNAIDS, 2002.

5. Conflict and Development in Africa

Conflict could be viewed in different perspectives; this is because the word "Conflict" has no global acceptable definition. According to Encarter Dictionary, conflict is a difference or a disagreement or clash between ideas, principles or people. The definition is with the opinion that an individual could say that whatever form of conflict you define, it is an issue that the both parties do not want to compromise their status quo.

Varying degrees of conflicts have existed and some are still happening in the cases of Libya, Egypt, Nigeria, Cameroun, Niger, Burundi, Rwanda, Somalia, Angola, Chad and Southern Sudan. The conflicts whether at the regional or continental levels are either intra or inter. These conflicts are either as a result of border issue or internal problem leading to civil war with high number of mortality rate and subsequently stagnates the development stride of the continent. At a time, some of the conflict nations have no central government. However, this is not to say that other continents have no conflicts but that African countries are highly vulnerable because of our diverse ethnic, political, economic, socio-cultural and religious beliefs.

It is worthy to note that Africa has its own traditional method of dispute resolution. The Africa is predominantly occupied by Christianity and Islam, their role in managing crises has impacted reasonably. However, the process of conflict resolution differs from one level of conflict to another in particular a Muslim to Muslim and a Christian to Christian compared to a Muslim with a non-Muslim or Christian to a non-Christian. The western alternative approaches to dispute resolution are Grassroots Community-Based activities, Good governance, communication, negotiation, collaboration, conciliation, mediation, arbitration, adjudication and crisis management. Diamond and McDonald (1996) gave synopsis of nine tracks for peacemaking activities: (i) Government- this is to say that the government must be proactive in handling conflict, (ii) Nongovernmental/professional or peacemaking through conflict resolution, (iii) Business or peacemaking through commerce, (iv) Private citizen peacemaking through personal involvement, (v) Research, Training and Education or peacemaking through learning, (vi) Activism or peacemaking through advocacy, (vii) Religion or peacemaking through faith in action, (viii) Funding or peacemaking through providing resources and (ix) Communication and the media peacemaking through information.

As a result of persistent conflicts in the continent, many scholars have come to develop interest on why the continent is bedeviled with conflicts and in so doing that political, economic and socio-cultural factors play important role in fueling the conflicts. Conflict resolution scholars argue that conflict has an anthropological basis in human needs and it is the denial which causes violent conflict or causes re-solvable differences to degenerate into armed violence or armed conflict. It is in the quest of managing conflicts that brought about peacemaking, conflict prevention, third party intervention, peacekeeping, peace enforcement and peace building. It is because of the way and manner conflicts are escalating, Africa has imbibed the orientation in educating and teaching of peace and conflict studies in Africa. This is so because of the little knowledge that the Africans claimed to know, however, the whole issue is about developing peace and conflict studies. Africa and Africans need peace to quickly come out of conflicts in order to pave way to fast track development that will reduce other vices in the continent.

Organization of African Union which was formed on the 25th May, 1963, made African conflict prevention as its priority. The organization also developed charter to enhance unity of the continent. African leaders in 1985 in Lome, Togo convened a continental Ministerial conference on disarmament and development in Africa. In 1993, Cairo declaration established within the OUA now AU a mechanism for conflict prevention, management and resolution founded from the Cairo declaration of 1990. In the year 2000 presidential election in Cote d' Ivoire, the organization intervened to avert conflict. OAU peacekeeping force was mounted in January, 1982 in respect to the civil war in Chad. Despite the regional efforts to avert conflict, United Nation currently is at the forefront in peace operation in eight countries in Africa. The countries are: Burundi, Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia, Ethiopia-Eritrea, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra-Leone, the Western Sahara and Sudan. Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) played an important role in ceasefire by (ECOMOG) in Liberia and Sierra-Leone (Iheme, 2016).

Shedrack (2016) noted that increasingly, conflict workers and handlers are trying to achieve better interpretation of conflict and the way it works, the understanding has simultaneously improved the professionalism of conflict management over the years. He however, listed the stages of conflicts as pre-conflict stage, confrontation stage, crisis stage, out come stage and post conflict stage.

David, J.F (2016) observed that despite efforts by the international community and African regional intergovernmental 'collective security' organizations to maintain peace and security in Africa and to manage/resolve conflicts and build the peace the continent lacks the depth of relevant knowledge, sustained capacity and critical mass expertise for conflict prevention, management, resolution and peace building and resultant failure to achieve peace has greatly affected speed of development in African continent.

Recently an African Jihadist group affiliated to Al-Qaida claimed the responsibility of the terrorist in Radisson Blu Hotel, Mali that led to the death of one hundred and seventy (170) people including foreign people. This led to the decision of Malian President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita not to attend a regional summit meeting in Chad (Daily Trust, 2015).

6. Major Conflicts in Africa

Series of conflicts have occurred in Africa that had rendered many homeless, death and incapacitated. However, this paper will provide synopsis of the conflicts that have seriously put African continent on its feet to ensure peace is secured for the countries involved.

The countries are:

- Angola. The country had civil war for 27 years and ended in 2002. The conflict was partly resolved;
- Central African Republic. Also had internal political instability and violent border of skirmishes over water and grazing right and it was a live conflict;
- Congo. 5 years of civil war which claimed 3 million lives, ended in 2003 and was partly resolved;
- Burundi. Civil war and occasional fighting between ethnic militia that spill across borders of Rwanda and Eastern Congo and it was a live conflict;
- Cote d' Ivoire. Clashes on-going between the rebel- held north and Army-held south and it was also a live conflict;
- Eritrea/Ethiopia. Border dispute which was violent it was a live conflict;
- Liberia. 14 years of civil war ended in shaky truce in 2003 and it was a live conflict;
- Congo-Brazzaville. Fighting between government and rebel forces despite the ceasefire in 2003 and it was also a live conflict;
- Sierra-Leone. 10 years civil war ended in 2002. However, peace was not maintained until in 2004 as a result of United Nation (UN) intervention and it was a live conflict;
- Somalia. Anarchy controlled county by feudal warlords and was a live conflict. Government was unable to control the capital city;
- Sudan. Ethnic war in Darfur region that harvested 50,000 lives to death, 1.5 million homeless and 200,000 people in refugee's camp in neighbouring Chad and it was a live conflict and
- Uganda. A brutal campaign of abduction and murder by mythical lord's resistance Army. 1.8 million were homeless and it was a live conflict (Adetula, 2016).

7. Causes of Conflicts in Africa

Conflicts are caused by several factors depending on the angles one is looking at it. Some scholars have attributed the causes of conflict to be socio-cultural, political and economic factors. However, this study has a different approach to the causes of conflicts in Africa for better and simple understanding of the subject matter. These are bad or ambiguous structures by colonial powers, inappropriate leadership, corruption, heterogeneous nature of ethnic groups in the continent and poverty. Other causes to African conflict are battle for control of natural resources, state collapse, economic decline and historical pattern of conflict.

8. Negative Outcome of Conflicts in Africa

- Death/loss of live
- Refuge problems
- Increased physically disabled people
- Unemployment
- Hunger and Poverty in the continent
- Problem of reconstruction
- Terrorism incursion
- Fire arms proliferation in the continent
- Impediments of integration
- Lack of investment

9. Concepts of African Union (AU) as a Major Instrument of Conflicts Resolutions in African Continent

The continental organization (AU) was established on the 25th May, 1963 with its headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The organization is composed of every African nation excepts Morocco, which withdrew from OAU in 1984 because it took exception of the OAU's inclusion of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic. However, Morocco is now back into African Union. The OAU was disbanded by the Chairperson, South African President Thabo Mbeki and replaced with African Union on 9th July, 2002 (Mwanasali, 2016).

The objectives of the African Union (AU) are: To achieve greater unity and solidarity between African countries and Africans, to defend the sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of its member states. In addition, to accelerate of political and socio-economic integration of the continent, promote peace, security and stability on the continent, promotion and defend African common positions on issues of interest to the continent and its people and promote sustainable development at all aspects of life as well as the integration of the African economies.

African Union is made up nine (9) organs that have varying responsibilities which effectively work for the Union. The organs are: The Assembly of Heads State and Government, the Executive Council, the Commission, the Pan- African Parliament, the

Court of Judiciary, the permanent representative's committees, the specialized technical committees, the economic, social and cultural council and the peace and Security Council (<https://au.int>).

Among the major achievements and because of the importance of this paper, in May 2013, AU Assembly of Heads of States and Government adopted a landmark declaration. They vowed that Africa would not bequeath the burden of conflicts to the next generation and made a commitment to end violent conflict on the continent by 2020. In that respect, the organization Peace and Security Council (PSC) at its 648th meeting held on 16th January, 2017, considered the Draft African Union master roadmap of practical steps to silence the guns in Africa by the year 2020. African Union is presently staging a peace talk in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia on the issue of South Sudan crisis (AIT, 2018).

The challenges of African Union among many challenges are confronted with post conflict reconstruction and development and peace building in the African continent.

10. Conclusion

The paper tries to x-ray what conflict and development are all about by exploring various contributions of scholars. It also tries to find out in holistic manner the root causes of conflicts as it affects developmental stride of the continent and also mentioned the countries that have suffered various degrees of conflicts. In the paper, we explicit efforts by regional governments in the continent, Organization of African Union (OAU) now African Union (AU) and that of the United Nation (UN) to ensure peace rather than conflicts in the African continent. This is not to say that other continents do not experience conflicts. The dangers associated with conflicts were also highlighted.

The paper noted that despite all efforts by the government, African Union and the international communities to avert conflicts in the continent, many countries of the continent are still experiencing conflicts like in the case of Southern Sudan.

Finally, the paper provided some vital recommendations/solutions that if properly annexed will to some extent reduce significantly the occurrence of conflicts in African continent and allow development to flourish.

11. Solutions/Recommendations

Haven gone through the study of the consequences of conflicts on development in Africa, it is therefore necessary to pin point the areas that could foster peace that will further pave way for development in Africa continent. First and foremost is for the entire citizenry to have national interest for our respective countries, committed and sincere leadership, equity in the distribution of resources, promotion of the rule of law, protection of fundamental human rights, eradication of poverty, equal access to quality education, provision of gainful job opportunities, provision of accessible and affordable health care services, creation of inter border commission and above all African Union should play a fatherly role by acting promptly to all issues of conflicts in the continent. Until all these issues are addressed, African continent will continue to be bedeviled with conflicts.

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